JULIE HERNE'S PLAY "RICHTER'S WIFE"

...BY FRANKLIN FYLES...

T THAT moment no one in the the-atre could be sure whether Julie Herne was acting or was not. Herne was acting or was not. Julie and her sister, Chrystal, had responded to many recalls during a play which Julie had written, and now the audience wished her to say something on her own account. Julie is but twenty and a hundred, years and pounds, which is young and light enough to render girlish modesty a probable sight. And she is blonde, besides, which gave to her exhibition of fright an appealing aspect of pale prettiness. She twisted to her exhibition of fright an appealing aspect of pale prettiness. She twisted her form, twirled her hands, stammered "I thank you," and collapsed in her tall and composed sister's arms. Now, in a box sat Leslie Carter, who at every performance of "Adrea" goes through with a never-varied process of being surprised by her audience's enthusiasm, becomes almost hysterical thusiasm, becomes almost hysterical under the nervous tension, runs as if by a sudden impulse to the wing, seizes David Belasco, leads him forward to speak for her, and shrinks behind him. Acting? Undoubtedly. Yet sometimes she has to be carried to her dressing room. In another box sat Ethel Barry-more, who eight times a week comes out after the penultimate act of "Sun day," astonished beyond anything by the insistent applause, falls into a panic at a call for a speech and runs behind the scenes as if mad with terror. Acting? Unquestionably. Yet sometimes she drops in a genuine faint when the curtain was days. Excitor

Herne had subjected herself to a se-vere ordeal. Minnie Maddern Fiske was among those present to scare her. I assume that Miss Herne had written vere ordeal. Minnie Maddern Fiske was among those present to scare her. I assume that Miss Herne had written 'Richter's Wife" for Mrs. Fiske, as one of its two women was of a kind which that actress could make much of; and Mrs. Fiske hed given her theatre for a her own gown. The only repulsive parameters was a small repulsive parameters. that actress could make much of; and Mrs. Fiske had given her theatre for a week of afternoon performances of the play; but instead of Mrs. Fiske's genius to illumine the role, there was only Miss Herne's moderate ability to dim it. It wasn't any wonder that the poor girl, who had striven in vain to get inside the part, fell to pieces the instant she got out of it. However, she has distinguished herself as a novice at play-writing who may become profiplay; but instead of Mrs. Fiske's genius to illumine the role, there was only Miss Herne's moderate ability to dim it. It wasn't any wonder that the poor girl, who had striven in vain to get inside the part, fell to pieces the instant she got out of it. However, she has distinguished herself as a novice at play-writing who may become proficient. If Mrs. Fiske were personating the wife of Richter the half success of the production might be a whole one. Mrs. Richter is superficially like Sardou's feather-brained, fluffy-hearted Frou-Frou, with no care for her solid husband, who therefore turns to her Frou-Frou, with no care for her solid husband, who therefore turns to her cousin, as Frou-Frou's did to her sister, for sympathetic solace. These surface indications are all that Miss Herne's acting makes us see in the uneasy life, and so we don't pity her; but Mrs. Fiske could render visible all that Miss Herne had in mind when writing—that Mrs. Richter loves her husband, that she is madly fealous of the fair cousin she is madly jealous of the fair cousin in whom he finds an affinity, that she is agonized while seemingly careless, and that, therefore, the discovery of them in a passionate embrace drives her reasonably and pitiably to suicide.

It was expected that a play written It was expected that a play written by James A. Herne's daughter, and staged by his widow, would be an ex-freme outbreak of dramatic Hernea. But "Richter's Wife" had no such phe-nomena. Herne, after many years in demonstrative melodrama, become a convert to quiet literalism. Like many But "Richter's Wife" had no such phenomena. Herne, after many years in demonstrative melodrama, become a convert to quiet literalism. Like many a convert from one faith to a very different one, he was an extremist. Before reaching that enthusiastic state, however, he achieved his one really great popular success by retaining, in "Shore Acres," the violent fight in a lighthouse, and the ensuing shipwreck spectacle, from the old play from which he re-wrote that otherwise delighfully natural depiction of normal human feelings. Herne's great merit was truthfulness, and it led him into the fault of giving as much space to physical as to mental matters. The visible nursing of a babe at its mother's breast in "Margaret Fleming" was made to seem more consequential than the invisible breaking of that mother's heart. Julia Herne does no such things in her play. Indeed, she is more like a pupil of Ibsen than her father. She makes Mrs. Richter an Ibsenish study in unlovely femininity. Then, again, she is dissimilar to Ibsen in striving to excuse the forbidden love of Richter for her fair cousin. The husband is a music master, the cousin is a singer under his tutelage, both are soulful and they convince themselves that ful and they convince themselves that ful and they convinced in the ordinary course of theatrical business. Last week we had five which were not "art for art's sake." but merely commercial affairs with art only incidental; and next week we shall have four more of those sordidly introduced things, involving admirable actors and authors in the dreadful degredation of the stage. Therefore the pessimists again next week, might week. Besides the Herne and Keenan beacons of hope, we have had gleams of promise from matinee performances by various uplifting societies. The Progressive Stage society gave Schnitz-ter's "Flirtation," in which a disstration of the stage. Therefore the pessimists of last week, we shall have four more of those sordidly introduced things, involving admirates the pessimists of last week, we s ger under his tutelage, both are soul-ful, and they convince themselves that their mutual passion is not a carnal disorder, nor even an ordinary heart disease, but a case of paroxysms of the soul brought on by a complication of propinquity and affinity.

A case of marital infidelity is set forth oddly in the quarter-hour drama of "The Threshold" by Jackson D. Haag. The manner of the illustration is as peculiar as the matter. At first we see nothing but a rainstorm at night. Silvery threads, electric gleams and camera reflections produce an illusion of a downpour of real water.

After a minute of this in silence, except for the splashing of the rain and the blowing of the wind, we hear a man's voice, and then a woman's response, both in cautious tones. Slowly and never more than dimly the threshold of a country house is outlined; also the figures of the man, who implores the woman to clope with him, and the woman, who is persuaded to consent. Finally a second man appears vaguely—to confront the lovers with a pistol and compel them to go into the house. There is nothing in that, you say, to make it a variant from common melodrama. Don't pass a hasty judgment. I did, and had to reverse it when I found that the captor of the couple was not the husband, but a burglar who, by chance, had chosen that time to break

We had our first clear view of these three persons when, inside the house, the burglar turned up the light of a lamp. He looked like an ordinary op-erator of the jimmy and the dark lanerator of the jimmy and the dark lantern. I wonder why housebreakers never shave themselves or put on collars hefore going out on a job. Perhaps they do in real life. This one was the stage type as to externals. But he soon let the culprits know that he was a rare bird of prey. The libertine was a rich fellow and willing to buy the other 'scoundrel's silence. He would give him twice as much in money as he could lue off in swag, and then leave could lug off in swag, and then leave him to finish his regular job if he

"I came here to steal the assets of this house," said the cracksman, "and I won't let you steal its liabilities." Then he explained his astonishing attitude in the affair. He had long ago been saddened, embittered, ruined by the elopement of his wife. He had be come a murderer by slaying the de spoiler of his home, and afterward had led the more sordidly criminal career of a robber. Well, when he caught the present pair of runaway lovers his impulse was to thwart the man and save the woman. The Launcelot of this latest romance of a matrimonial triangle slunk off abashed, the Guinevere rereated in repentance to her sleeping husband's side, and the intefering Glamacco-here no jester gone wrong, but a burglar gone right-went on his way without giving any hint as to his future behavior, and that was all—except, oh, yes—the burglar discovered that the woman he had rescued was his own daughter. Theatric and im- ism;" Jane S. Klink contributes another

That was one of the short pieces given this week in Frank Keenan's New York imitation of Andre Antoine's theatre in Paris. You have read of Antoine's tages on which he of Antoine's stage, on which he produced all manner of unusual plays. A recent French disclosure of this kind, although not at that house, was an acting version of Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether," in which those two Junatics turned on the officers of an asylum, took control of the place and asylum, took control of the place and put a visitor through a frightening demonstration of the Tarr and Fether method of treating insanity. Poe was not a joker, and the scant humor of that tale was all grim. The French play had no humor of any kind, but was altogether gruesome with the horrors which might come in the described circumstances. Paris likes to be impressed in that way. Mr. Keenan did pressed in that way. Mr. Keenan did not test the question whether New York would enjoy such an awful sen-York would enjoy such an awful sensation. The play made by Henry Tyrrell and Arthur Hornblow was suggested by de Lorde's, no doubt, but is no more like it than it had to be if it was to follow the Poe original at all. They locate the asylum across the river from Gotham. The entrapped visitor is a state senator making a reformatory investigation. His encounter with Tarr and Fether is facetious, and not very different in plan and ror. Acting? Unquestion...

sometimes she drops in a genuine faint when the curtain goes down. Emotional creatures, these players. Julie Herne isn't the artist that Leslie and Ethel and not very different in plan and are, and for that reason, if no other, there was no need to doubt the sincerity of her collapse.

The content of the curtain goes down. Emotion formatory investigation. The curtain goes down. In the curtain goes down. Emotion formatory investigation. The curtain goes down. Emotion formatory investigation formatory investigation. The curtain goes down. Emotion formatory investigation formatory investigation formatory investiga of dementia. Fether is more eccentric while he describes, and makes the senator try, his curative feat of

Mr. Keenan is as likely as not to a tract remunerative attention to his Antoine enterprise, although nothing Antoine enterprise, although nothing of the kind has ever yet done well here. His theatre is a tiny one, off Broadway, but close to the Delmonico and Sherry corner of Fifth avenue, his company is small, though sufficiently capable, suitable plays are plenty at low or no royalties, and so he can live on moderate receipts. He is himself an enthusiast in the matter of dramatic are and literature, and an actor with ample versatility for a variety of with ample versatility for a variety of roles. He was the burglar and the doctor in the pieces described, and in tor in the pieces described, and in the other one—a tragedy by Arthur Hornblow called "The Strolling Players," and based on Cartulli Mendes' "Woman of Tabarin"—he was a mountebank who, in a jealous phrenzy, slays his wanton wife while an audience thinks it is all make believe. The same story is told in the opera of "I Pagilia. story is told in the opera of "I Pagliac

This is a week without a new play Wives," in which a fascinating actress raises hobs with a husband and his wife. The Thalia Coterie performed if German Goldasta's "God, Man and the Devil," in which the voice of Jehovah is heard to make a wager with the visible Devil as to the evil one's ability to land a certain man in hell. The Devil plays a long, shrewd game to win and almost succeeds. This is a win, and almost succeeds. This is reverential play, though most American Christians would regard it as sacriligious. And we have had repetitions of some of William Butler Yeats' lrish literary plays, given very expertly at matinees by the Wycherly company. Thus we've had a range of uncommercial plays, from pretentious worthlessness to genuinely peculiar

Even in vaudeville this week gives us some dramatic art that is genuine. At one house I saw Archie Boyd with only one assistant actor in a sketch that made my eyes leak. Boyd is a counterpart of Denman Thompson, and you may have seen him play Thompson's role in "The Old Homestead" without knowing it—for they do say that Thompson sometimes gets a vacation that way. Boyd has just such a part in "After Many Years," in which quaintly humorous rusticity is accompanied by the pathos of an old farmer's longing for his wayward son and only one assistant actor in a er's longing for his wayward son and his simple joy at the wanderer's re-turn. And if I hadn't gone to see Boyd I wouldn't have seen Carlotta She is a young woman who loops the loop on a bicycle, and I am told that folks stop in day after day in hopeful dread that they may be there when she breaks her neck.

In another variety show I saw Mary Shaw, the accomplished actress of Ibsen and Sudermann. I wanted to find out how a song-an-dance audience audience would take a condensed version of "Ghosts" or "Magda," but Miss Shaw had decided not to test the tick-lish question. She substituted the old comedietta of "The Silent System." Her quiet skill was finely effectual with the same crowd which, ten minutes later was howling over the noisy jests later, was howling over the noisy jests and clownish antics of Eddie Foy in a knockabout farce. And again there was keen appreciation of the half-dozen demure devils of showgirls, who dozen demure devis of showghrs, who appeared in pajamas of shy modesty, but came back for a disclosure in the flesh-colored tights of bold audacity. The tastes of vaudeville audiences seem to be broad and catholic.

MAGAZINES FOR MARCH.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.—The March Atlantic opens with the initial chapters of Margaret Sherwood's serial, "The Coming of the Tide," which enlists attention and awakens interest from the very outset. Frank Foxcroft discusses the "Drift Away from Prohibition," James A. LeRoy treats of "Our Spanish Inheritance in the Philippines;" G. H. Montague discusses "The Ethics of Trust Competition;" William C. Dreher's German letter treats of "Recent Events in Germany;" Paul Milyoukov takes up "Present Tendencies of Russian Liberalism;" Jane S. Klink contributes another

THE SALT LAKE HERALD SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1965

SECTION TWO

duties on the "Servand Girl Question," and the later of the properties of the pro

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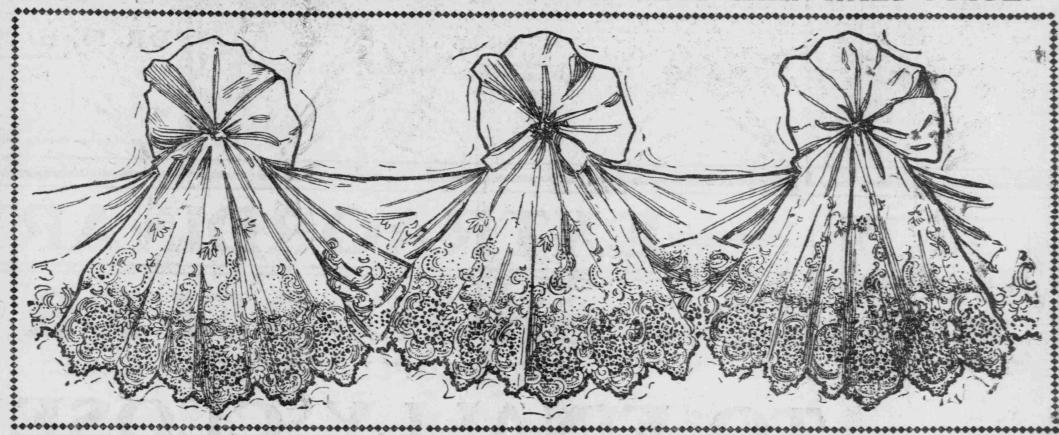
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